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**AFGHANISTAN**

## SNAPSHOT

# Afghans Revive Traditional Crafts

**USAID has provided generous support to train a new generation of Afghan artisans**



*Humira, a graduate of the Turquoise Mountain Institute*

***More than 200 students are in training, or have already learnt one of the traditional arts of jewelry-making, woodworking, calligraphy and miniature painting and ceramics.***

Humira is a graduate of the Turquoise Mountain Institute for Afghan Arts and Architecture in Kabul and she now teaches at its calligraphy and miniature painting school. She says it's a dream come true. "I joined the school because of my special interest in sustaining our traditional art, which is diminishing because of decades of war. Enrolling helped me learn the art of my passion."

It also gives Humira an income, which helps support her family. It was made possible by USAID, which has provided generous support from 2008 to train a new generation of Afghan artisans many of them women. The program's goal is to revitalize Afghanistan's rich tradition of arts and crafts, as well as to promote businesses in Murad Khane, the old part of Kabul where Turquoise Mountain is located.

More than 200 students are in training or have already learnt one of the traditional arts taught at Turquoise Mountain. These are: jewelry-making, woodworking, calligraphy and miniature painting and ceramics. Women account for 30 per cent of the students. Seventy per cent of the program's 94 graduates continue in jobs related to their speciality. The graduates tend to echo Humira's excitement when they describe the process of learning skills that enable them to create beautiful products.

Buyers are enthusiastic too. One said, "I bought a wood carving from Turquoise Mountain Institute last month. The quality of the work was terrific. I bought the piece as a wedding gift...they loved it."